In the Claims

Please amend the claims as follows. Applicants present a full set of claims showing markups of the claims with insertions and deletions indicated by underlining and strikethrough text, respectively.

1. (Original) A luminescent particle comprising one or more compounds of the formula:

$$M^2[M^1(POM)]$$

wherein:

M^2 is a cation, M^1 is an ion of a metal capable of providing a luminescent centre or a mixture of two or more thereof, and

POM is a polyoxometallate, a polythiometallate or a polyoxythiometallate of at least one metal of group VA or VIA of the Periodic Table and, optionally, a hetero atom X, the amounts of X, M^1, M^2 and POM being such as to provide overall neutrality.

2. (Original) A particle according to claim 1 wherein M^1 is Eu^{3+}, Tb^{3+}, Dy^{3+}, Tm^{3+}, Er^{3+}, Cr^{3+}, Ce^{3+}, Pr^{3+}, Sm^{3+}, Nd^{3+}, Ho^{3+}, Yb^{3+}, Ti^{4+} or Mn^{4+}.

3. (Original) A particle according to claim 2 wherein M^1 is Dy^{3+}, Eu^{3+} or Tb^{3+}.

4. (Currently amended) A particle according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 wherein M is vanadium, niobium, tantalum, molybdenum or tungsten.

5. (Original) A particle according to claim 4 wherein M is molybdenum or tungsten.

6. (Currently amended) A particle according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 wherein POM contains a heteroelement X.

7. (Original) A particle according to claim 6 wherein X is a transition metal or B, Al, Si, P, S, Ga, Ge, As, Se, In, Sb, Te, I, Pb or Bi.

8. (Original) A particle according to claim 7 wherein X is Si or Al.

9. (Currently amended) A particle according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 in which the polyoxymetallate comprises MO_6 octahedra.

10. (Currently amended) A particle according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 wherein M represents more than one metal.

11. (Currently amended) A particle according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 wherein the compound contains at least 15 oxygen atoms.

12. (Currently amended) A particle according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 having a quantum efficiency that is at least 1%.

13. (Original) A particle according to claim 12 wherein the quantum efficiency is at least 5%.

14. (Currently amended) A particle according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 wherein M^2 is an ion of hydrogen or a metal of group 1A or 2A of the Periodic Table or an optionally substituted ammonium ion, or a mixture of two or more said ions.

15. (Original) A particle according to claim 14 wherein M^2 is sodium, potassium or optionally substituted ammonium.

16. (Original) A particle according to claim 15 wherein M^2 is sodium or ammonium.

17. (Currently amended) A particle according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 which has a diameter not exceeding 20 nm.

18. (Original) A particle according to claim 17 which has a diameter not exceeding 5 nm.

19. (Currently amended) A particle according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 which possesses a coating rendering the particle suitable for biotagging application.

20. (Original) A particle according to claim 19 wherein the coating is of silica.

21. (Canceled)

22. (Currently amended) A process for preparing a particle as claimed in ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 which comprises dissolving a water soluble salt of an oxo/thiometallate of M and optionally of an oxo/thioanion of X and a water soluble salt of M^2 in water, adding acid, and then adding a water soluble salt of M^1 and recovering the resulting product.

23. (Original) A process according to claim 22 wherein the salts are all of M^2.

24. (Currently amended) A process according to claim 22 ~~or 23~~ wherein the acid is acetic acid or hydrochloric acid.

25. (Currently amended) A process according to ~~any one of claims 22 to 24~~ claim 22 wherein the mixture is heated before the acid is added.

26. (Currently amended) A process according to ~~any one of claims 22 to 25~~ claim 22 wherein a water soluble salt of an oxo/thio anion of X is added with the water soluble salt of the oxo/thiometallate of M.

27. (Canceled)

28. (Currently amended) A particle as claimed in ~~any of claims 1 to 21~~ claim 1 for use in biotagging, drug discovery/development, electroluminescent displays, magnetic centres of coatings, security marking/labelling/identification, drug delivery, non-destructive testing or in agricultural products.